



# DANIEL'S PLACE

*...a program of Step Up on Second*

**THANKSGIVING 2011**

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE FRIENDS OF DANIEL'S PLACE:

As a well trained physician, I am used to leading: taking action, helping others, guiding, directing, knowing what to do or where to look. When my son was diagnosed with schizophrenia, I was totally unprepared, lost, bewildered, and desperate for help. My son's illness changed his life and it changed mine. I realized I couldn't do it alone. And I very much needed to know I was not alone.

When my son needed a safe place to go, one where he felt accepted and understood, Daniel's Place was there with effective programs, support groups, and a place to have fun. At Daniel's Place, my son could meet with other young adults with similar challenges. That was SO important.

Our family has seen many joys, and unfortunately a few disappointments. When times are difficult, Daniel's Place provides a tremendous comfort, as well as vital and important resources to my family. The staff is only a phone call away, always ready to answer my questions, and give me guidance. The collective wisdom there is very powerful. As our journey continues, I'm learning to be thankful for and to focus on that which is working in our lives.

It took my son's mental illness to make me aware of how the needs of young adults affected by mental illness are neglected. There is a clear lack of services across the entire Los Angeles County for young adults who are struggling with the symptoms of a "first break". The recession has reduced even more the availability of those existing services. Add to this, the proportion of young adults coming to Daniel's Place who are also homeless is increasing.

Daniel's Place is the only program of its kind in the country. Since its inception nearly fourteen years ago, over a thousand individuals and their concerned family members have been served by its recovery programs. This year, Daniel's Place has enrolled 58 new young adults - and their families - into the program, bringing the total number of young adults served by Daniel's Place services to 242 individuals.

The sense of connection and camaraderie at Daniel's Place is reflected in its programs and services. Some 223 young adults attended 1,988 different groups during 2011. Regular group topics include setting goals, meditation, art, nutrition, "staying calm and carrying on", recovery, and job skills. Through the supported employment training and placement program at Daniel's Place, 27 participants worked in paid positions last year in Step Up's kitchen and café. This important component of Daniel's Place helps participants who, because of their age, have had little experience in the job market.

Step Up has also opened Daniel's Village -- 8 units of a permanent supportive housing to help young adults who are battling with the initial onset of a mental illness lead more independent and self-sufficient lives.

**Daniel's Place needs your help.** Providing the highly effective and specialized care for our young adults is more expensive care than most -- it requires licensed clinical staff, life-skills coaches, peer supporters, a family advocate, and psychiatrists for medication support. But where would we be without them?

Daniel's Place continues to provide a place of belonging and hope to young adults whose lives have been turned upside down by the onset of mental illness. Being associated with Daniel's Place is the best way I can think of to be an advocate for mental health reform and progress. Your support will ensure that the educational and recovery programs and services of Daniel's Place will continue to be there for us and other families and loved ones.

Sincerely,



Debbi J., MD  
Daniel's Place "Grateful Parent"